

Today's News - Monday, April 22, 2013

- We are so saddened by the news that we've lost Rick Mather much too soon: the London-based "quiet American" was "respected for his 'blend of pragmatism and quiet conviction.'"
- Iovine issues her own protest against MoMA: "by engaging with rather than demolishing AFAM, MoMA could show itself to be a far-sighted urban planner rather than opportunistic real estate developer" (never mind "regaining the trust of an architectural community shaken to the core").
- Stern issues his own stern warning about East Midtown Manhattan plans: "The proposed up-zoning doesn't give anything back to New York. It's all about real estate and not about place-making, or should I say, place-saving" (never mind the lack of infrastructure).
- Hawthorne gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Stern's "carefully and cannily contextual" Bush library: "what emerges, finally, is an image, necessarily imperfect, of a president in architectural form."
- Litt has high hopes that "the biggest attempt at regional planning in a generation" will help the Northeast Ohio region better deal with its current patterns of sprawl and urban population loss.
- Wainwright wonders if Argentina's entrepreneurial architects' strategy to bypass bureaucracy could it help to ease the UK housing crisis.
- Lange x 2: she understands the importance of way-finding systems, "but architecture needs to work without words" (some great examples of what not to do).
- She offers a most eloquent ode to Huxtable: "She eschewed utopias but not ideals" (long live long journalism!).
- Lubenau hits the road again to visit another Rudy Bruner Award finalist: Inspiration Kitchens - Garfield Park, Chicago: "Among the smallest of the finalists in size, it shares the intent of encouraging healthier urban living and sustainable development."
- Seattle's Bullitt Center, the "first urban mid-rise commercial project to meet the Living Building Challenge" in the U.S., fittingly celebrates its grand opening today (a.k.a. Earth Day).
- An eyeful of what the green roof of Gehry's Facebook HQ will look like - oak trees and a walking trail included.
- Russell wrestles with Rudolph's UMass Dartmouth campus as he "sat stewing under the lock-down order" in post-Marathon Cambridge: could the "gigantic eerie, dozen-building concoction of grim ribbed-concrete hubris...aid the alienation...of even a smart, sociable kid?"
- Olcayto takes Russell to task: "Sometimes smart guys say the dumbest things... There are so many valid questions he could have asked instead. In the meantime he can start by letting Rudolph off the hook."
- On happier notes: the 2013-14 Rome Prize winners are announced + the new Laurentian University School of Architecture names its founding faculty, who will be moving to Sudbury from Toronto, Waterloo, Chicago, Montana, and Germany.
- One we couldn't resist: a music historian and architecture buff re-introduces the world to "The Music of William C. Wright" - and the fascinating musical legacy of FLW's father.
- **HAPPY EARTH DAY!** An image from the first Earth Day in 1970 on this Earth Day 2013.

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Obituary: Rick Mather, 75: American-born, London-based architect...whose Ashmolean Museum in Oxford was shortlisted for the Stirling Prize in 2010, was respected for his 'blend of pragmatism and quiet conviction'. [images] - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Protest> MoMA To Cannibalize Cultural Artifact: It remains to be seen how this decision could undermine the efforts of the architecture department to regain the trust of an architectural community shaken to the core...by engaging with rather than demolishing American Folk Art Museum, MoMA could show itself to be a far-sighted urban planner rather than opportunistic real estate developer. By Julie V. Iovine -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien- The Architect's Newspaper

Op-Ed: A Modern City in East Midtown? ...the problem with the so-called East Midtown planning study is that it's not a plan...Instead of blindly targeting what is oldest for replacement...why not develop a thoughtful preservation plan that takes a broad look at what is worth saving? The proposed up-zoning doesn't give anything back to New York. It's all about real estate and not about place-making, or should I say, place-saving. By Robert A. M. Stern -- George B. Post; James Gamble Rogers; Carrère & Hastings; Arthur Loomis Harmon- New York Times

Bush presidential library is fittingly blunt: The George W. Bush Presidential Center at Southern Methodist University...is carefully and cannily contextual...The building, like the Bush presidency, aims to stay resolute even at the expense of some nuance...what emerges, finally, is an image, necessarily imperfect, of a president in architectural form. By Christopher Hawthorne -- Robert A.M. Stern- Los Angeles Times

News about urban poverty, growth and sprawl reveal Northeast Ohio as a region at odds over its future: ...nonprofit Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium...undertaking the biggest attempt at regional planning in a generation...to release a "scenario" study showing how current patterns of sprawl and urban population loss will affect the region in coming decades. By Steven Litt- Cleveland Plain Dealer

Housing without developers: Argentina's architects show the way: The fideicomiso model allows residents and architects to bypass bureaucracy. Could it help to ease the UK housing crisis? Across Buenos Aires...these self-built blocks...have become a common sight. The cumulative effect...has led to the revitalisation of neighbourhoods... By Oliver Wainwright -- Elias Redstone; Adamo Faiden architects; David Kohn Architects- Guardian (UK)

Architecture Without Signs: I love graphic design. I understand the importance of way-finding systems...But architecture needs to work without words. The building should point your way to its entrance without an arrow. Finding the visitors desk should not require a level change...Architects should not allow the visitor to trip, physically or graphically, on the threshold. By Alexandra Lange [images]- Design Observer

Dreams Built and Broken: On Ada Louise Huxtable: ...by turning buildings into news...[she] enjoyed a career that epitomized the argument she would repeatedly make...architecture is "the art we cannot afford to ignore"...She eschewed utopias but not ideals. By Alexandra Lange -- Toyo Ito; Frank Gehry; Christian de Portzamparc; Alvaro Siza; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Minoru Yamasaki; Daniel Libeskind; Tod Williams Billie Tsien- The Nation

On the Road with the Rudy Bruner Award: Inspiration Kitchens - Garfield Park, Chicago: ...located in one of the city's most distressed neighborhoods...provides healthy, free meals to the working poor as well as workforce training...Among the smallest of the 2013 RBA finalists in size...shares the intent of encouraging healthier urban living and sustainable development. By Anne-Marie Lubenau -- Wheeler Kearns Architects [images]- Metropolis Magazine

Bullitt Center Meets Living Building Challenge: On April 22 (a.k.a. Earth Day), it will commemorate its grand opening in Seattle...Bullitt Foundation, which works to protect the natural environment by

promoting responsible activities and sustainable communities...new location...will promote just that...already tenanted with organizations that have similar sustainability-driven goals. -- Miller Hull Partnership; PAE Consulting Engineers - Green Building News

This Is What Facebook's Green Roof Will Look Like: The company is building a giant addition to their headquarters, and a giant park to go along with it. That park just happens to be on the roof...will include oak trees, a walking trail, furniture to lounge on...kiosks and cafes... By Ariel Schwartz -- Frank Gehry [images, links]- Fast Company

Paul Rudolph and the Marathon Bomber: The day before, I'd gone to have a look at the University of Massachusetts campus in Dartmouth, a gigantic eerie, dozen-building concoction of grim ribbed-concrete hubris...As I sat stewing under the lock-down order...I wondered about the effect of such a deeply impersonal place...Does such a place aid the alienation...of even a smart, sociable kid? It sounds much too glib an explanation...but I can't help thinking it. By James S. Russell- Sticks & Stones

Why did James Russell suggest Brutalist architecture caused the Boston Marathon bombings? Sometimes smart guys say the dumbest things...even though it means compromising his absurd last-paragraph sucker-punch that blames the architecture for alienating Dzhokar Tsarnaev, Russell actually quite likes them...There are so many valid questions he could have asked instead...I'm sure, in time, Russell will consider them. In the meantime he can start by letting Rudolph off the hook. By Rory Olcayto- The Architects' Journal (UK)

2013-14 Rome Prize Winners Announced -- Thomas Kelley; Catie Newell/Alibi Studio; Nicholas de Monchaux; Thomas Leslie; Thompson M. Mayes; Max Page; Bradley E. Cantrell; Elizabeth Fain LaBombard/James Corner Field Operations- American Academy in Rome

Founding faculty members hired at new Laurentian University School of Architecture: ...six "outstanding" professors...will be moving to Sudbury from Toronto, Waterloo, Chicago, Montana and Germany. -- Terrance Galvin; Mark Baechler; Kenneth (Jake) Chakasim; David Fortin; Tammy Gaber; Randall Kober; Kai Mah- Canadian Architect

A new musical legacy for Frank Lloyd Wright's father: Long portrayed as a distant parent and meager breadwinner who abandoned the family when Frank was 17, the senior Wright emerges as a much different character...in the new CD, "The Music of William C. Wright." Produced by...music historian and architecture fan David Patterson...- Madison.com (Wisconsin)

Happy Earth Day: An image from the first Earth Day in 1970 on this Earth Day 2013. - EarthSky

Overdrive: L.A.'s Future is Present in its Past: Simultaneously hopeful and wistful, The Getty Museum's exhibition is about the evolution of a modern city seen through its architecture, confirming the truly layered nature of Los Angeles. By Julie D. Taylor [images]- ArchNewsNow

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